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## Vote 0 South Asian groups welcome revocation of 'misguided' travel policy

By IANS

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WASHINGTON - Leading South Asian groups have welcomed the rescinding of a "misguided policy" of enhanced security screening for passengers travelling from 14 predominantly Muslim-majority countries, including Pakistan, to the United States.

"The new policy announced today is a step in the right

direction, and we call upon the [Transportation Security Administration](#) to apply it in a neutral and nondiscriminatory manner," said Deepa Iyer, Executive Director of South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT).

"Targeting travellers simply based on their national origin, as the previous directive did, resulted in profiling, civil rights violations, and the diversion of critical resources that our country needs to identify genuine threats to security."

US authorities Friday announced that new security protocols will supersede the 14-country directive. This new system will be based on specific threat-based intelligence information, and will be applied to all passengers travelling to the United States.

After the implementation of the earlier policy, SAALT had expressed serious concerns about the policy's reliance upon nationality and [country of origin](#) as triggers for heightened security procedures, and its disproportionate impact on community members of Arab, Muslim and South Asian descent.

Welcoming the change, The Sikh Coalition said since the old "policy focused solely on national origin and not individual behaviour, it effectively made profiling the law of the United States. Its withdrawal is a step in the right direction towards ending [federal government](#) profiling."

At the same time Coalition announced its intention to continue fighting to ensure Sikhs and other minorities are not the subject of unfair scrutiny by [air travel](#) security.

The Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations, a prominent national Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, has also welcomed new intelligence-based airline security measures.

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### Asian states urged to ratify criminal court treaty

*March 26th, 2010* BRUSSELS - The European Union (EU) Friday welcomed the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) by Bangladesh, EuAsiaNews reported. "This ratification Tuesday, bringing the number of ICC states parties to 111, marks a further significant step forward in the international community's efforts to combat impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

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### Fiji-Indian origin man who raped strict Hindu family girls in Auckland jailed

*March 24th, 2010* AUCKLAND - The rape victims, who came forward to help police arrest a Fiji-Indian-origin serial sex-offender despite their strict Hindu backgrounds, were lauded by Auckland High Court Justice John Priestley. A Fiji-Indian origin man who raped and blackmailed several young women after taking advantage of their strict South Asian upbringing will spend at least 10 years in jail.

### Tajikistan court jails, fines dozens of members of banned Islamic group

*March 10th, 2010* Tajik court jails banned Islamic group members DUSHANBE, Tajikistan — Tajikistan's Supreme Court has sentenced dozens of people to prison terms for belonging to a banned Islamic organization. The court says 23 members of the Jamaat al Tabligh were ordered Wednesday to serve from three to six years in prison, and another 33 were ordered to pay fines up to \$16,000.

### India's GDP will grow if more women are employed: UNDP

*March 7th, 2010* NEW DELHI - India can increase its [Gross Domestic Product](#) (GDP) by as much as 4 percent if the employment rate for women is pushed up, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) said Monday. In a report released on the occasion of the International Women's Day, it said: "In countries such as India, Indonesia and Malaysia, conservative estimates show that GDP would increase by 2-4 percent annually if women's employment rates were raised to 70 percent, closer to the rate of many developed countries." Helen Clark, the UNDP administrator who released the report here, said: "Under-representation of women in workforce has a negative impact on GDP.

### Illegals from Bangladesh plague South Korea too

*December 2nd, 2009* PANAJI - Illegal migration from Bangladesh isn't India's headache alone. According a senior immigration official from South Korea, now in Goa to attend the 8th Asia-Europe (ASEM) conference of Directors General of Immigration on management of migratory flows, illegal immigration from Bangladeshis is a major issue confronting them.

### South Asian Women's Day observed in Delhi

*November 30th, 2009* NEW DELHI - Students from a number of South Asian countries living in Delhi came together at the Delhi University Monday to celebrate the South Asian Women's Day. The celebrations saw cultural programmes by students from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Tibetan community.

### SC House speaker: Governor's rendezvous not serious enough to bring impeachment proceedings

*November 17th, 2009* SC lawmaker: Affair not enough to impeach governor COLUMBIA, S.C. — A top South Carolina lawmaker says the embattled governor should not face impeachment simply because he left to see his Argentine lover over the summer.

### Country-wide campaign on disability to start Friday

*November 12th, 2009* NEW DELHI - In a unique awareness programme on disability, four different groups, each constituting a [disabled](#) person and four volunteers, will travel across the country and sensitise people on the issue through personal conversations. The groups will leave the capital Friday.





### 3 South Asian students knifed in London, Indian-origin students among those targeted

*November 10th, 2009* LONDON - Four people suffered stab wounds after a mob of white and black youths set upon Muslim Asian students - including at least six of Indian origin - near the prestigious [City University](#) in north London, police and student groups said Tuesday. Three students and a passerby who tried to intervene had to be hospitalised with facial and head injuries when a 30-strong mob armed with knives, metal poles, bricks and sticks attacked South Asian students Thursday, police said.

### Court asks travel operator to compensate for deficient service

*November 8th, 2009* NEW DELHI - Coming down heavily on a private tour and travel operator for deficiency in service, a district consumer forum has directed it to compensate a man for sending a bus to ferry a marriage party with fewer seats than he had asked for. District Consumer Forum president K.K.

### Action plan for disabled women soon: Bengal panel

*November 3rd, 2009* KOLKATA - The West Bengal Women's Commission is planning to come out with a comprehensive action document with recommendations for bettering the lot of the physically challenged women in the state, its chief said Tuesday. The commission is now preparing a blueprint before holding dialogue with policy makers, government officials and stakeholders on how to bring changes to the life of women with [disabilities](#) (WWD).

### A round table for women with disabilities in South Asia

*November 2nd, 2009* KOLKATA - Participants from South Asian countries will deliberate on how to secure the rights of physically challenged women in mainstream society at a round table in Kolkata Tuesday. "Representatives from South Asian nations - Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives - will participate in the round table discussion.

### India has policy to address workplace stigma against AIDS

*October 30th, 2009* NEW DELHI - The Indian government Friday came out with a national policy on [HIV and AIDS](#) at the workplace to address the stigma and discrimination faced by people afflicted with the disease and provide them support and care. Announcing the policy, Labour Minister Mallikarjun Kharge said: "HIV and AIDS are a major threat to the world of work and have shown maximum impact on the most productive segment of the labour force." "The policy will help to generate awareness about HIV and AIDS, encourage action to prevent its spread and further improve and develop the support and care initiatives at the workplace," Kharge said while releasing the policy document - National Policy on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work - at the 43rd session of the standing labour committee here.

### We'll pack you off to South Pole: BNP leader told on BBC show

*October 23rd, 2009* LONDON - The leader of the anti-immigrant British National Party (BNP) was booed, jeered and scorned by the studio audience of a popular [television show](#) after weeks of protests against his appearance erupted Thursday in a large demonstration and six arrests. As Nick Griffin made his debut on the flagship BBC panel discussion show Question Time, an Asian member of the audience told him that far from expelling non-Whites from Britain, it is the BNP leader who could be put on a flight out.

### Obama-Dalai Lama meeting delayed to curry favour with China: report

*October 5th, 2009* WASHINGTON - For the first time since 1991, the Dalai Lama will visit Washington this week and not meet with the president as the US has delayed a meeting in an attempt to gain favour with China, according to the Washington Post. US pressured Tibetan representatives to postpone the meeting between the Tibetan spiritual leader and President Barack Obama until after Obama's summit next month with his Chinese counterpart, Hu Jintao, the influential US daily reported Monday citing diplomats, government officials and other sources familiar with the talks.

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"Yes, we have to divide up our time like that, between our politics and our equations. But to me our equations are far more important, for politics are only a matter of present concern. A mathematical equation stands forever." - Albert Einstein

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